

Legislative Update

State Representative

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- Appropriations
- Rules
- Trade and Economic Development
- Assistant Ranking Republican

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2004 Mid-Session Report to the Voters

From Rep. Joyce McDonald
25th District

Dear friends,

As we are nearly midway into a 60-day legislative session which began Jan. 12, I would like to take a few moments of your time to provide a brief look at several major issues under discussion.

As you may remember, last year we were faced with the challenge of closing a \$2.7 billion deficit in the state budget. We did it following the lead of the governor by setting priorities in government and with no general tax increases.

This year, with a little extra money coming in to the state and the Legislature considering a supplemental budget, the governor seems to have abandoned his earlier approach and has asked us to begin spending large amounts of money. I believe we must continue to exercise fiscal caution, especially as the economy remains unsteady.

Other top items I'm working for include: a better business climate that will create jobs, making government work better for all of us, and new policies that will ensure safer communities.

It is an honor to serve you in the House of Representatives. Please feel free to contact me about any issues involving state government that are important to you and your family.

Sincerely,



2004 Legislative Priorities

- ✓ **A balanced budget** that does not require tax increases or a reduction in vital state services.
- ✓ **Creating new jobs** by fostering a better business climate.
- ✓ **Affordable, accessible health care** through reforms that will help control costs.
- ✓ **A quality education** through improvements to the WASL and by recruiting, retaining and rewarding quality teachers.

Rep. Joyce McDonald • Legislative Update

2004 Mid-Session Report • 25th District

■ Be wise about spending

State government's financial picture is a little better now than at this time last year. Yet, just because there's a little more money flowing in to the state's coffers doesn't mean we should go on a spending spree. That's what got our budget in trouble in the first place.

This year we will adopt a supplemental budget to cover spending changes that couldn't have been anticipated when the budget was adopted last year – such as higher K-12 school enrollments. However, we should not spend any more than necessary. The most responsible thing to do is to stay the course, ensure that government is running efficiently, and let the state's savings account grow so that we can protect taxpayers and essential programs in the future.

■ Better representation through four-year terms

State representatives have only two years in office before they have to run again for re-election. Two-year terms give House members precious little time to concentrate on legislation and representing constituents before having to focus back on the campaign trail again.

Campaigns are expensive, with the average state House race costing \$100,000. They also take up an extraordinary amount of time – time that could and should be better used representing citizens. That's why I have introduced a resolution that would provide four-year terms for members in the House of Representatives. Changing to four years would allow our citizens to have better and more effective representation in the House. It would also attract a broader spectrum of people to run for the Legislature and provide a fresh approach to government. The Senate already has four-year terms. It makes sense to do the same in the House.



■ Ensuring we can trust officials in positions of trust

We want to ensure that good decisions are made before we put public officials into a position of trust. That's why I have introduced and co-sponsored several measures:

House Bill 2322 - I prime-sponsored this measure to require all new law enforcement officers to undergo a psychological examination and a lie detector test before they are hired by any city, county, or state law enforcement agency in Washington. Law enforcement officers are put into a position of trust with the community. When citizens see the uniform, a gun and a badge, they have a reasonable right to expect that the person holding the position is worthy of that trust. Most people assume this is already the law. It is not, but through this bill, it will be.

House Bill 2456 - This is another bill I prime-sponsored to ensure additional safeguards in the hiring of school district employees. This measure would require school districts to provide known information about employees' sexual misconduct when those employees attempt to transfer to other school districts.

House Bill 2392 - Resulting from the tragic murder of Crystal Brame by her husband, Tacoma Police Chief David Brame, I have co-sponsored this measure which requires law enforcement agencies to adopt policies concerning domestic violence by sworn employees.

■ Changing how government does business

If we are serious about creating a business-friendly climate that will create jobs in the state of Washington, we also need to make government more customer-friendly. We have a government of the people and by the people. That means that government is here to serve us, the people, not for us to be servants of the government. Yet dealing with state agencies is often very frustrating. There are so many, many regulations and government red tape that make life difficult in our state. I am supporting efforts for regulatory reform and for making government agencies more service-oriented.

Rep. Joyce McDonald discusses job creation during a meeting of the House Trade and Economic Development Committee.